

Good afternoon. I'm Sherry Shelley. I live in Riverton, and my comments today represent very deeply held personal values, and I'm also a proud member of the Sierra Club. I was born and raised in Wyoming and, following college, deliberately chose to come back to this state to raise my family because I deeply value our clean air and water, our incredible landscape and diverse wildlife. So I'm here today to talk about the devastating effects of the impacts of coal mining on our national environment. Much of the publicly owned coal that is mined in Wyoming through the BLM leasing program lies under grasslands, ranches, wildlife habitat and open spaces. But even though we have decent reclamation laws here in Wyoming, it turns out that coal companies can get away from not properly restoring the lands that they have torn apart with their strip mining until long after mining moves into new areas. And since under the current system they are permitted to self-bond rather than paying for real insurance that would cover the cost of reclaiming these lands after they've moved on, there's no assurance that reclamation will occur at all when companies go bankrupt as we're seeing today. There is a huge risk that taxpayers will end up footing the bill amounting to millions and millions of dollars for cleanup. Coal companies should be required to clean up the land they have already mined before they get new leases and they absolutely should not be allowed to self-bond. Out of a total of 450 square miles of mine land across Wyoming, Montana, and North Dakota, only 46 square miles have been fully reclaimed. By cheaply leasing public coal to the big coal companies, not requiring timely reclamation, and not requiring that companies have adequate reclamation insurance, we are missing opportunities to use these spaces to support existing and emerging industries in the West including agriculture and ranching, tourism, and clean energy. Timely reclamation of mine landscape benefits our western communities and reopens lands for ranching, wildlife, and recreation. It creates good job opportunities, and it reduces the risk that the public will have to pay for reclamation if coal companies fail and insurance bonds are inadequate. By reforming the federal coal leasing program to disallow self-bonding and require timely and complete reclamation, we can protect and sustain our land, water, and wildlife instead of creating sacrifice zones for a

resource that is less and less economically viable with every passing day. Thank you very much.